

IN THE CLAIMS:

Set forth below in ascending order, with status identifiers, is a complete listing of all claims currently under examination. Changes to any amended claims are indicated by strikethrough and underlining. This listing also reflects any cancellation and/or addition of claims.

1. (currently amended) A method for processing audio data, comprising:

presenting a plurality of virtual devices to a user, ~~each of the plurality of virtual devices associated with at least one of a plurality of output channels on a sound card;~~

receiving a selection from the user, the selection being an association of at least one of a plurality of audio data streams generated by different applications with at least one of the plurality of virtual devices, each virtual device associated with at least one output audio channel of a plurality of output channels of a sound card; and

using a plurality of virtual device drivers to write audio data streams from open applications into a system memory accessible by a sound card and to program the sound card to associate audio data streams of open applications with output audio channels based on the user's selection of virtual devices; and

at an audio processing unit of the sound card, reading audio data and the virtual device selection from system memory;

at the audio processing unit of the sound card, multiplexing audio data streams from open applications based on the user's selection to support simultaneously outputting audio from a plurality of open applications according to the user's selection of virtual devices; and

outputting audio from open applications according to the user's selection of virtual devices, wherein the user's selection associates one or more virtual devices with the audio stream of each of one or more applications and audio streams of open applications are simultaneously output.

~~outputting the at least one of a plurality of audio data streams from the sound card based on the user's selection.~~

2. (currently amend) The method of claim 1, further comprising the audio processing unit writing multiplexed audio data streams back to system memory and an audio codec interface of the sound card reading multiplexed audio data streams from system memory and routing signals

in the digital domain to a plurality of audio codec DACs to generate analog output channels according to the user's selection ~~wherein presenting includes displaying list of the plurality of virtual devices on a graphical user interface.~~

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~2~~, wherein presenting includes displaying a list of the plurality of virtual devices on a graphical user interface wherein the graphical user interface associates each of the plurality of output channels with at least one of a plurality of jacks on the sound card.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~2~~ 3, wherein the graphical user interface associates each of the plurality of output channels with at least one of a plurality of audio devices external to the sound card.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~2~~ 3, wherein the graphical user interface associates each of the plurality of output channels with at least one of a plurality of geographical locations.

6. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein receiving includes receiving inputs from the user via a graphical user interface.

7. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the each of the plurality of audio streams are associated with one of a plurality of audio applications.

8. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein receiving includes reading an association of at least two audio data streams with a single virtual device.

9. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein outputting includes converting each of the plurality of audio data streams from digital to analog format.

10. (currently amended) A system for processing audio data, comprising:

a sound card having an audio processing unit to read digital audio data from a memory and an audio codec having a plurality of digital to analog converters (DACs) to support a plurality of analog output channels; and

a graphical user interface configured to display a plurality of virtual devices to a user, each of the plurality of virtual devices representative of at least one of the plurality of output channels on the sound card, the graphical user interface further configured to receive a selection from the user, the selection being an association of each an audio data stream with at least one of the plurality of virtual devices, the sound card coupled to the graphical user interface to receive the user selection and the audio data streams, the sound card further configured to output the audio data stream based on the selection; and

a plurality of virtual device drivers to write digital audio data streams from open applications into the memory and to program the sound card to associate digital audio data streams of open applications with analog output audio channels based on the user's selection of virtual devices;

the system outputting audio from open applications according to the user's selection of virtual devices, wherein the user's selection associates one or more virtual devices with the audio stream of each of one or more applications and audio streams of open applications are simultaneously output.

11. (cancelled)

12. (currently amended) A method for processing audio data, comprising:

in a sound card, reading a system memory storing a plurality of audio data streams from open applications and a user selection, the user selection being an association of each of the plurality of audio data streams with at least one of a plurality of virtual devices, each of the plurality of virtual devices representative of at least one of a plurality of output channels on a sound card;

in an audio processing unit of the sound card, performing audio processing that includes multiplexing the plurality of audio data streams based on the user selection into a multiplexed audio data stream based on the user's selection and writing the multiplexed audio data stream to the system memory; and

in the sound card, performing an audio codec operation that includes reading the multiplexed audio data stream from system memory and parsing the multiplexed audio stream into a plurality of output data streams, each of the plurality of output data streams being associated with at least one of the plurality of output channels based on the user selection; and outputting audio from open applications according to the user's selection of virtual devices, wherein the user's selection associates one or more virtual devices with the audio stream of each of one or more applications and audio streams of open applications are simultaneously output.

13. (original) The method of claim 12, wherein parsing is based on a predetermined scheme.

14. (original) The method of claim 12, further comprising mixing at least two of the plurality of audio data streams.

15-16. (cancelled)

17. (currently amended) A system for processing audio data, comprising:

a system memory having a plurality of audio data records from open applications and a user selection, the user selection being an association of each of the plurality of audio data records with at least one of a plurality of virtual devices, each of the plurality of virtual devices representative of at least one of a plurality of output channels on a sound card;

~~a first~~ an audio processor of the sound card being coupled to the system memory and configured to read the plurality of audio data records and the user selection, the first audio processor further configured to multiplex the plurality of audio data records based on the user selection into a multiplexed audio data record; and

~~a second processor~~ an audio codec and associated audio codec interface of the sound card being coupled to the system memory and configured to parse the multiplexed audio record into a plurality of output data streams, each of the plurality of output data streams being associated with at least one of the plurality of output channels, the audio codec including a plurality of digital to analog converters (DACs) with the audio codec being configured to process the process the

plurality of output data streams and assign output data streams to digital-to-analog converters associated with output channels defined by the selection:

the system supporting outputting audio from open applications according to the user's selection of virtual devices, wherein the user's selection associates one or more virtual devices with the audio stream of each of one or more applications and audio streams of open applications are simultaneously output.

18. (original) The systems of claim 17, wherein the first processor is further configured to mix at least two of the plurality of audio data records.

19-20 (cancelled).